

CHAPTER IV.

News from Monterey—Advance of our troops—Appearance of the country—Volunteer regiments—Gen. Taylor leaves Camargo—Seralvo—Its appearance—Its cathedral—Gen. Taylor's orders—Mexican proclamations.

THE news from Monterey was of an uncertain and contradictory character. The imprisonment of Paredes was mentioned, in connection with heavy reinforcements of troops that were said to be concentrating in that city. The evidently unsettled state of the Mexican government gave rise to a belief that there would be no opposition made at Monterey.

The steady advance of our troops now became a matter of course. Means of transportation, principally pack-mules, had been obtained, and supplies moved forward with regularity. The volunteer division steadily concentrated at Camargo, and proceeded on with order, and Gen. Taylor began to make preparations to move his headquarters to Seralvo.

The country from Mier to Monterey constantly increased in interest. Successive ranges of mountains presented themselves, that had a cool, refreshing look, and gave earnest that the long, weary marches in the hot sun would finally cease, under the pleasant atmosphere of a temperate climate.

The Volunteer regiments—the First Mississippi, under Col. Jefferson Davis, the First Tennessee, under Col. Campbell, the First Ohio, under Col. A. M. Mitchell, the Baltimore Battalion, under Lieut. Col. W. H. Watson—were much reduced in numbers by sickness and other unavoidable causes. Gen. Taylor made it a principle of action to take with him only the able-bodied who could, without doubt, stand the fatigues of the long march; he, therefore, quickly discharged those who seemed to be discontented; and the sick, the moment that they were able to leave the hospital, were furnished the means of returning home. It

was a remarkable fact, that those of our volunteer troops who were from a northern climate, were, when once prostrated by sickness on the Rio Grande, if they recovered from the first attack, obliged to seek a change of atmosphere, or they invariably relapsed and died.

On the 6th of August, Gen. Taylor crossed the San Juan, at Camargo, and on the morning following started for Seralvo. Major Gen. Patterson was left in command at Camargo, his jurisdiction extending to the mouth of the Rio Grande. Orders were issued, prohibiting strangers from entering the river, which, joined with the previous prohibition as to the sale of ardent spirits, made the police of the country effective, and secured the greatest good order and quiet in the valley of the Rio Grande.

News had now reached our army of the arrival of Gen. Ampudia at Monterey, with an immense force; and that the city was perfectly fortified. For the first time, it was understood that the Mexicans would make stout resistance under the walls of that city.

Seralvo is a pleasant town about half-way between Camargo and Monterey. The town attracted attention because it was entirely of the Moorish Spanish style of building; the bare fronts of the houses had a most desolate appearance, and made the place look entirely deserted, yet there were many evidences of an industrious population.

Splendid gardens, filled with fruit trees of all varieties peculiar to the temperate and torrid zone, were growing side by side in the greatest luxuriance. Towering corn and choice vegetables filled up the landscape. These evidences of industry, the gardens, were irrigated by a fine mountain stream, which was made to flow through the very centre of the town; its limpid waters often broken into cascades and little falls, and at all times murmuring along in soft whispers of sweet music. A large church, of singularly oriental appearance, towered over the landscape, its white walls, in the quiet moonlight, unconsciously reminding the spectator of the times of the Crusades, or the stirring events of the Alhambra, when the Spaniards drove the Moors from their ely-

sium homes, and reared the cross where before the crescent waved in sullen dignity.

The curious soldiers stole into the building through the half-opened door, and found it unlike the exterior. Within it was light and graceful, save the earthen floor, which was damp like that of a vault; the paintings on the walls were falling piecemeal from their frames, or obscured by the mould that had settled over their questionable beauties. A large wooden crucifix seemed to be decaying away, uncared for: all told volumes of a people who had lost the enthusiasm that had originally prompted the erection of the building; in fact, it was a visible, startling representation of Mexico.

The climate at Seralvo must be singularly fine; every thing gave evidence of such a blessing; it was, at the time our army first occupied it, the month of August, like the balmiest weather of spring in Louisiana; the atmosphere seemed delightful to breathe, such as makes existence consciously pleasant. In the hands of an enterprising people, Seralvo would be an earthly paradise; the valleys would raise all the necessities and luxuries of life, the mountain sides would provide food for innumerable herds, and the wild grapes that ripen upon the precipices of the hill sides, would yield an abundance of wine; at present, all these advantages are comparatively unappreciated and unenjoyed.

On the 9th of September, Gen. Taylor entered Seralvo. The scene presented was singularly imposing; the First and Second Divisions with their respective commanders, Generals Twiggs and Worth, were now together. The long train wound over the hills and descended into the valleys, portions of it disappearing at an instant, and then unexpectedly appearing boldly marked against the clear blue sky. There was apparently a strange mixture of infantry and artillery, baggage-wagons and cavalry, yet as they entered Seralvo and vicinity, there was observable the strictest military precision in all the arrangements; every part fell into assigned places with a precision that displayed the very perfection of military discipline.

On the evening of the 9th, a Mexican express arrived at Seralvo,

bearing despatches addressed to the inhabitants of the country, by Gen. Ampudia. They are so characteristic of Mexican proclamations, that they deserve a notice, and they are also a part of the history of the surrender of Monterey.

NUMBER ONE.

The General-in-chief of the corps de armée of the North, to the valiant soldiers of the first division which is found in front of the enemy.

Soldados—This long paragraph exhausts the Spanish in laudation of their "military virtues," "elevated patriotism," and "important services they had rendered their country."

Soldados—Great and immense are the national interests which have been intrusted to your valor and constancy under fatigue. The republic and foreign nations are awaiting the effect of the arms which the people have placed in our hands for their defence. Bear in mind that it is ten thousand times more reputable to die for our honor and sacred independence, than to drag out a dishonored existence.

Soldados—Be patient under your sufferings; reinforced as you will be by the brigades which are on the march, you are certain that the hymn of victory will be sounded; you will avenge the blood of your brothers shed on the 8th and 9th of May, and take satisfaction for those inconceivable disasters.

From your general and sincere friend.

(Signed,)

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

HEAD-QUARTERS in the city of SALTILLO, August 27, 1846.

NUMBER TWO.

The General-in-chief of the corps de armée of the North to the inhabitants of the departments of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas.

Fellow-citizens (conciudadanos): For the second time I enter this interesting part of the Mexican territory, to lead the soldiers who are anxious to fight, in order to humble the pride of the foreign

invader, and to liberate from the minions of slavery, to which we shall be reduced, if he shall consummate his depraved intentions.

We have visible examples of this assertion in the disgraceful condition of the inhabitants of Bejar, La Bahia, and recently the district of the North of Tamaulipas. We apprehend the great principle is incontestable, that the people which seeks to be free, is so.

Recollect, countrymen, that the Spanish nation, with the warlike and formidable armies of Napoleon in her capital and strong places, maintained a vigorous and triumphant resistance to the end of the glorious struggle; and we ought not the less to remember, that the heroes of our own emancipation from the mother country, without science in war, struggled for the space of eleven years to break the chains that bound us to the will of a monarch distant two thousand leagues.

My friends: our brethren from neighboring departments hasten to the war; they send thousands of brave volunteers to your aid; and lastly, it is very probable that the leader of our independence (!) and founder of the republic, (!) General of Division and benefactor of the country, D. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, will come to the theatre of the war, at the head of a large reinforcement of troops, to conduct the campaign. In the mean time, courage, countrymen; and oppose the enemy by your utmost efforts.

(Signed,)

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

HEAD-QUARTERS in the city of SALTILLO, August 27, 1846.

NUMBER THREE.

Pedro de Ampudia—General de Brigada y en gefe del Cuerpo de Ejercito del Norte, a los Habitantes de este Departamento, Hajo Saber.

The army of the United States having invaded the Mexican territory, and penetrated with the greatest insolence into the heart of this department, threatens to occupy its capital; and without calculating the end of his invasion, I am compelled to provide for the emergency, and augment successively our defences, placing in action all the elements we can command. The importance of this

place, and my responsibility, are apparent. The enemy has dared to present himself at our doors, and with his advance has insulted and provoked us without motive or any reason to justify his ignoble and treacherous proceedings. I must, then, avoid and prevent the evil which approaches, for it is thus that honor and duty advise. Let us go to repel force with force, as the instinct of self-preservation dictates. But I ought first to adopt all the means capable of giving order to my operations; and for this object using the ample authority which the supreme government has conceded to me, and with which, in my character as general-in-chief, it has invested me for such cases, I publish the following declaration:—

ART. 1. It is declared that this place is in a state of siege.

2. The civil authorities and public functions, during the siege, are subordinate to the military in every thing relating to the defence and service of the place.

3. All citizens shall assist with their arms in the national defence, in the manner, time, and form which the authorities may determine; and to this end the citizens shall yield to the advice and orders of their respective military commanders.

4. Every crime of unfaithfulness, sedition, mutiny, or any other which may place in jeopardy the security, tranquillity, or defence of the place, shall be tried by the military courts.

And that these articles may come to the notice of all the inhabitants, they are published as an edict from this day.

(Signed,)

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

HEAD-QUARTERS in MONTEREY, August 31, 1846.

NUMBER FOUR.

El General en gefe del Cuerpo de Ejercito del Norte que suscribe.

Considering that the hour has arrived when energetic measures and precautionary dispositions should be taken to liberate the departments of the East from the rapacity of the Anglo-Americans, and for attending to the rights of the people and the usages of war, every person who may prove a traitor to his country, or a spy of the enemy, shall suffer death without any remission of sentence; and taking into consideration that it is my bounden duty to

put an end to the evils which have been caused by the contraband trade that has been indiscriminately carried on by the usurpers of our sacred territory; and using the faculties which the laws have empowered me with, I decree as follows:—

1. Every native or foreigner who shall, either directly or indirectly, voluntarily aid or assist the enemy in any manner whatsoever, shall suffer death by being shot.

2. All those who, after the publication of this proclamation, shall continue to traffic in contraband articles with the enemy, shall suffer the same penalty named in the preceding article.

3. The authorities of every branch of the public service will take especial care, under the strictest responsibility, that this article shall be rigorously complied with.

4. This proclamation should produce popular action amongst our citizens, who are under the obligation to make known any infraction of it, and all citizens are empowered to apprehend criminals and deliver them over to the judicial authorities; and that all persons may be duly notified, and that none may plead ignorance, I order the publication of this proclamation, and that due circulation shall be given it.

(Signed,)

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

Given at HEAD-QUARTERS in MONTEREY, August 31, 1846.

NUMBER FIVE.

El General en jefe del Cuerpo de Ejercito del Norte que suscribe.

In consideration of having declared yesterday that this place is in a state of siege, and that for this reason I ought to provide all kinds of necessary provisions, in obedience to the authority in me vested as general-in-chief, and of the powers which have been intrusted to me by the supreme government, I now decree as follows:—

1. All citizens may introduce into this place, free from duties and every municipal tax they have been accustomed to pay, corn, beans, onions, butter, cheese, charcoal, forage, and generally all kinds of national products which may be necessary.

2. The respective authorities of the cities, the people and the

towns, will endeavor to arouse the patriotism of the citizens, to the end that the provisions of the preceding article may be observed, and will attend most particularly to whatever will redound to the good of the country and its dearest interests.

3. Every individual, without any exception, who leaves this place, must have a passport or permission from the major-general of this division of the army, D. Jose Garcia Conde, without which requisite he may be detained and placed at the disposition of the authorities legally constituted.

(Signed,)

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

Given at HEAD-QUARTERS in MONTEREY, Sept. 1, 1846.

At Seralvo, the march to Monterey was arranged in every particular. Major Gen. Butler arrived, and the volunteer division concentrated in the vicinity. On the 11th instant, the following important order was issued:

The order of march of the American Army.

HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMY OF OCCUPATION,

Seralvo, Sept. 11, 1846.

1. As the army may expect to meet resistance in the farther advance towards Monterey, it is necessary that its march should be conducted with all proper precaution to meet attack and secure the baggage and supplies.

From this point the following will be the order of march until otherwise directed:

2. All the pioneers of the army, consolidated into one party, will march early to-morrow on the route to Mérine, for the purpose of repairing the roads and rendering it practicable for artillery and wagons. The pioneers of each division will be under a subaltern, to be especially detailed for the duty, and the whole be under command of Capt. Craig, Third Infantry, who will report to head-quarters for instructions. This pioneer party will be covered by a squadron of dragoons and Capt. McCulloch's company of Rangers. Two officers of Topographical Engineers, to be detailed by Capt. Williams, will accompany the party for the purpose of examining the route. Two wagons will be provided by the quarter-master's

department for the transportation of the tools, provisions, and knapsacks of the pioneer party.

3. The First Division will march on the 13th inst., to be followed on successive days by the Second Division and field division of volunteers. The head-quarters will march with the First Division. Capt. Gillespie, with half of his company, will report to Major Gen. Butler; the other half, under the first lieutenant, to Brig. Gen. Worth. These detachments will be employed for outposts and videttes, and as expresses between the column and head-quarters.

4. The subsistence supplies will be divided between the three columns, the senior commissary of each division receipting for the stores and being charged with their care and management. The senior commissaries of divisions will report to Capt. Waggaman for this duty.

5. Each division will be followed immediately by its baggage train and supply train, with a strong rear-guard. The ordnance train under Capt. Ramsay will march with the Second Division, between its baggage and supply train, and will come under the protection of the guard of that division. The medical supplies will, in like manner, march with the First Division.

6. The troops will take eight days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition. All surplus arms and accoutrements, resulting from casualties on the road, will be deposited with Lieut. Stewart, left in charge of the depot at this place, who will give certificates of deposit to the company commanders.

7. The wagons appropriated for transportation of water will not be required, and will be turned over to the quarter-master's department for general purposes.

8. Two companies of the Mississippi regiment will be designated for the garrison of this place. All sick and disabled men, unfit for the march, will be left behind, under charge of a medical officer to be selected for this duty by the medical director.

By order of Major Gen. Taylor.

W. W. S. BLISS,
Ass't. Adj't. General.

On the 13th, the First Division took up its line of march according to order. The first day's march, after leaving Seralvo, was over a rocky road, muddy and intersected by little streams from the mountains, through which the troops had to wade, making the march a heavier one than had at any time previously occurred. The march of the following day was over a similarly bad road; the ranchos were found to be deserted, at least so they appeared. Gen. Torrejon, with a large cavalry force, was known to be constantly ahead; in fact our advance guard often drove the rear-guard of the enemy. The expectations and feelings of the Mexicans were displayed in the following proclamation, issued on the second day's march of our troops from Seralvo.

The General in Chief of the Army of the North to his Companions in Arms.

SOLDIERS:—The enemy, numbering only two thousand five hundred regular troops, the remainder being only a band of adventurers without valor or discipline, are, according to reliable information, about advancing upon Seralvo to commit the barbarity of attacking this most important place. We count near three thousand regulars and auxiliary cavalry, and these will defeat them again and again, before they can reach this city. Soldiers, we are constructing fortifications, to make our base of operations secure, and hence we will sally forth at a convenient time and drive back this enemy at the point of the bayonet.

Soldiers! three great virtues make the soldier worthy of his profession; discipline, constancy under fatigue, and valor. He who at this moment would desert his colors, is a coward and a traitor to his country. Our whole nation, and even foreign countries, are the witnesses of our conduct. The question now is, whether our independence shall be preserved or for ever lost; and its solution is in your hands.

I have assured the supreme government of the triumph of our arms, confiding in your loyalty and enthusiasm, and will prove to the whole world, that we are worthy sons of the immortal Hidalgo, Morelo, Allende, Iturbide, and so many other heroes who knew

how to die combatting for the independence of our cherished country.

Soldiers! victory or death must be our only device.

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MONTEREY, *Sept. 14, 1846.*

As at Matamoros, Gen. Ampudia seemed to think that there were many persons in our army who would willingly desert, and he caused to be distributed along the road a very warm appeal to those "who desired to abandon our flag;" fearing lest his first effort might fail of the desired effect, he followed the address to his companions in arms with the following:

ARMY OF THE NORTH, }
General-in-Chief.

HEAD-QUARTERS, MONTEREY, *Sept. 15, 1846.*

It is well known that the war carried on to the Republic of Mexico by the government of the United States of America, is unjust, illegal, and anti-Christian, for which reason no one ought to contribute to it.

The federal government having been happily re-established, a large number of battalion of the National Guards in the states of Coahuila, St. Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Queretaro, and others, are ready to be on the field and fight for our independence.

Acting according with the dictates of honor, and in compliance with what my country requires from me, in the name of my government I offer to all individuals that will lay down their arms and separate themselves from the American army, seeking protection, that they will be well received and treated in all the plantations, farms or towns, where they will first arrive, and assisted for their march to the interior of the republic by all the authorities on the road, as has been done with all those that have passed over to us.

To all those that wish to serve in the Mexican army, their offices will be conserved and guarantied.

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

CHAPTER V.

Mérine—Scenery—Letter from the Spanish Consul—Movement of the Army—Alarm of the Mule-drivers—Arrival of Gen. Henderson—Monterey in the distance—Order of battle—Grove of St. Domingo.

ON the 16th, the First Division reached the vicinity of Mérine, where it encamped to wait the concentration of the army, and also to collect forage for the horses and mules. The delay was acceptable to all. The general character of the road from Seralvo was exceedingly heavy, it being covered in many places with loose stones, and broken up by ridges and ravines. The same mountain, apparently so near at Seralvo, had now changed its position, and appeared on the opposite side of the landscape, yet easily distinguishable by its peculiar crest.

The scenery in and about Mérine was more beautiful than any previously seen. The small town seemed to be absorbed in the residence of a few men of easy circumstances, and a great number who appeared to be dependants upon their bounty. A costly church overlooked the whole.

From the cathedral height of Mérine, the broad valley, into which our troops had been so long descending, opened for twenty or thirty miles its rich soil, enclosed, as it were, in a circle of sterile mountains. The city of Monterey could just be distinguished in the distance, its outlines in the blue haze dreamily indistinct; beyond still, in silent grandeur, broke in huge masses the Sierra Madre, their tops piercing the clouds, and by comparison dwindling into pigmies the heretofore stupendous masses of upheaved earth on which our troops had been so long gazing with wonder and awe.

The scenery about Mérine, by its sublimity and softness, set many a soldier's heart wandering; the imagination would fill the airy outlines of the distance with ten thousand pictures of hope or ambition; in some cleft, was clustered the chastened group of the home

fireside, out of which looked mild eyes of love; or the circling gold-tinged clouds, that constantly climbed their way upwards, were as wings to the ambitious imaginations that dreamed of honors won at the cannon's mouth.

Nothing could exceed the sweet repose, by nature, of the valley of Mérida. It was a place in which to build a cloister, where the broken hearted might wear away a chastened existence, previous to a glorious home in another world. But the shrill fife and winding bugle horn now roused the spirit; the heavy tramp of the march, and the lumbering wheels of artillery, disturbed the quiet of this sequestered spot, as remorselessly as if upon the more congenial wastes towards the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Towards the evening of the 17th, a letter was received from the Spanish consul, residing at Monterey, inquiring if the property of foreigners would be respected. Gen. Taylor replied, that he would be responsible for nothing, if the town was taken by assault.

Early on the morning of the 18th, the First Division, respectively followed by the other two, took up its line of march. The road was now open, and no longer required the pioneers. Capt. Craig was therefore relieved from his command. The San Juan, which had now become a rapid stream, three or four feet deep, was forded. At noon, the advance came to the little village of Agua Frio, or more properly a *hacienda* of that name, for it was nothing else than a residence of a rich old grandee, who, living himself in wealth, kept the surrounding population, his labourers, in the most miserable poverty. It was stated that the proprietor of Agua Frio contributed seventy thousand silver dollars towards the defences of Monterey.

After the march of a few miles further along a road bounded by rich fields of maize and sugar cane in high cultivation, the thriving town of San Francisco presented itself. Here were singular evidences of thrift for Mexico. Several fine residences and a commodious church were in process of erection, and the general appearance of the town betokened wealth.

At San Francisco was received the first positive information that resistance would be made to our progress at Monterey. The old

padre of the village informed Gen. Taylor, that the most determined opposition would be made, that Gen. Ampudia had determined never to surrender the city except with his life.

Much alarm was created among the Mexican mule drivers in our employ, by the report that Gen. Canales was in our rear, but the horsemen that gave foundation to the report, proved to be Gen. Henderson's brigade of Wood's and Hay's regiments of mounted Texans, which had travelled by the way of the China road, and which fine body, at this opportune moment, added eleven hundred to Gen. Taylor's force.

The morning of the 19th was memorable for its excitement. Hundreds of our soldiers were volunteers, who had begun the long march from Matamoros to Monterey, with the greatest impatience. The time to be consumed in its accomplishment seemed never ending. Day after day, however, passed away, and the sun at last rose, with Monterey before them. Ten thousand mixed feelings sent the blood back to the heart, and ten thousand strange hopes flitted through the mind. A city to be stormed, and glory to be won! How fruitful of events were to be the next few days, perhaps the next few hours!

The army advanced in order of battle. On either side were to be seen a constant succession of deserted houses; ahead and on either side rose high mountains, over the tops of which there rolled and fretted the morning clouds, while the mists of the early day struggled upwards, opening before the advancing columns, first the suburbs, and then the city itself.

Gen. Taylor and staff, with a number of officers, were ahead; then followed the advanced guard, McCulloch's and Gillespie's rangers. Immediately after them was Gen. Henderson's brigade, while Gen. Twiggs with the first division of the army, and Gen. Worth with the second, followed; the volunteer division under Gen. Butler bringing up the rear.

The beautiful grove of St. Domingo was passed, when the city burst upon the sight in all its splendour. The mists still clung around the turrets of its churches, and enveloped its commanding heights; but the ascending sun constantly dissipated the veil, until

palace and hill, barricade and fort, with long lines of tents and pendent flags presented themselves, as if floating in the pure ether with which they were surrounded. All was silent; not a breath of air stirred; dewy softness rested upon every thing. Suddenly a hot sulphurous smoke rose quickly from one of the bastions of the citadel, a heavy cannon-shot cleared the air with its hissing sound, and long before its booming sound was heard, two more in quick succession followed; one of the deadly missiles ricocheted directly over Gen. Taylor's head, and, just beyond him, plowed deeply in the earth.

A cry of exultation followed from those who witnessed it, which was taken up by the long lines of advancing troops, until it was carried miles in the rear, the shouts mingling strangely with the ten thousand echoes that were awakened among the mountains, by the firing of the heavy artillery that announced that the battle of Monterey had begun.

The first division accelerated its speed, and quickly arrived where Gen. Taylor had halted, when it formed into order of battle; while this was being done, the gallant old chieftain, surrounded by his staff, coolly, through his glass, examined the defences of the city, when orders were issued for the army to encamp at the beautiful grove of St. Domingo, so recently passed.

This grove, to the fatigued soldier, when contrasted with the untimbered country of Mexico, seemed a perfect paradise, and it is no doubt the finest collection of trees in northern Mexico. It is several miles in length, and nearly three-fourths in width, and on all sides it slopes gradually to its centre, and is evidently the basin of a once beautiful lake; some of the sources of this once mirrored sheet displayed themselves in splendid fountains of the purest water, that gushed from the cleft rocks, then sweeping over gravelly beds finally united in one rapid stream, broken into silvery cascades, that enlivened the deep shadows, thrown by magnificent live-oaks, pecans, and the more tropical trees that formed the grove.

There were evidences that great care was taken of this sylvan retreat. Among the sturdy trunks, as well as those of more delicate

growth, were to be seen guards erected for their protection. Cleared spots spoke eloquently of the festive scene; the very thrones of the mandolin and guitar were recognisable. Youth and beauty, middle life and old age, found here, in the umbrageous shade, a solace from the cares of a crowded city. Love and reflection were alike encouraged. But now, the soft and tender scenes of social life had vanished; the heavy wheels of artillery ground and disfigured the earth; where had threaded the cotillon now stood the rough soldiers; and against the trees where had hung so often the rebosa too heavy for the dance, now leaned the polished musket. Sharp bugle notes pierced the air in place of the merry laugh of children. The cherished grove of St. Domingo was bristling with the implements of war.